Oral Exit Report
Quality Assurance Review Team
District Accreditation – Kentucky TECH

David Billingsley - Executive Director
Office of Career and Technical Education

What does district accreditation involve?

- **The capacity of a school system to address three major elements. As such, a school system must:**
  - Meet standards for accreditation;
  - Demonstrate a systemic and continuous process of improvement; and
  - Implement methods that provide for quality assurance.

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Role and Responsibilities
Quality Assurance Review

- **Assess the capacity of the system to meet the standards;**

- **Assess the efficacy and impact of the improvement process;**

- **Assess the effectiveness of the system's methods for quality assurance;**

- **Identify strengths of the system deserving of commendation; and**

- **Develop recommendations which are designed to help strengthen the school system.**

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Oral Exit Report
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District Accreditation

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team**
  - Reviewed documentation provided by the school system;
  - Developed points of inquiry for the on-site review;
  - Established, in collaboration with district personnel, a schedule of activities and interactions that would provide for significant stakeholder involvement;
  - Conducted interviews of a representative set of stakeholders throughout the state; and
  - Engaged in professional deliberations as a team to consider the capacity of the school system to meet the requirements for district accreditation.

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Quality Assurance Review
District Accreditation

Interviews with Stakeholders

- **During the on-site Quality Assurance Review, team members interviewed:**

  The Secretary of Education
  The Commissioner of Workforce Investment
  The Executive Director
  The Deputy Executive Director
  10   Branch Supervisors
  4   Area Supervisors
  10   Curriculum Team Members
  11   Administrative Support Staff
  13   Local Superintendents/Asst. Superintendents
  53   Principals
  87   Teachers
  152 Students
  100 Stakeholders

  444 Subtotal

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Quality Assurance Review
District Accreditation

Interviews with Stakeholders

- **During the on-site Quality Assurance Review, team members interviewed: (continued)**

444   Subtotal

1   Senator
1   State Representative
1   Judge Executive
2   Mayors
1   County Judge
1   Magistrate
3   School Board Members

10   Subtotal

454 Total Persons Interviewed

12 Schools visited on September 12, 2006
2000 miles traveled

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Quality Assurance Review
District Accreditation

Evidential Process

- **In considering the evidence as provided through data, documentation, observation, and dialogue, the Quality Assurance Team**
  - Sought a district perspective;
  - Pursued evidence that could be correlated through multiple sources;
  - Examined the context and capacity of the school system in relation to its vision, mission, and beliefs; and
  - Applied the criteria for accreditation.

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Summary of our Observations

- **Strengths…conditions that exist which benefit the school district.**
- **Achievements…recent accomplishments achieved by the school district.**
- **Commendations…professional commendations by the Quality Assurance Review Team.**
- **Limitations…conditions that exist which are potential barriers.**
- **Challenges…opportunities that the district may seek to address for further improvement.**
- **Recommendations…professional recommendations by the Quality Assurance Review Team.**

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District Accreditation

Strengths

- **Principal's Advisory Council**
- **Standardized Curriculum Initiatives**
- **High Functioning Student Organizations**
- **Program Assessment/Data Driven**
- **Kentucky Occupational Skill Standards for Assessment**
- **Flexibility**

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Strengths

- **Industry Certified/Credentialed Staff**
- **Willingness to Work Toward Integrating Academics into Technical Courses**
- **High Levels of Collaboration Between and Among Staff**
- **Support for Professional Development**
- **Curriculum Alignment with KCTCS**
- **Application of Skills**

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Accomplishments

- **Articulation Agreements/Dual Credit-KCTCS**
- **Over 4000 Students Earned Dual Credit Last Year**
- **Viable Student Organizations in All Schools**
- **Industry Certifications – ASE, AWS, Etc.**
- **Student Performance in Student Organizations**

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Commendations

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team Commends Kentucky TECH for:**
    - **The development of a lesson plan data base for all technical programs**
    - **The initiative to develop end-of-course assessments for all technical programs**
    - **The development of a best practices network**
    - **The flexibility to work with multiple district calendars and schedules**
    - **The creation of an Exemplary District Continuous Improvement Plan**

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Commendations

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team Commends Kentucky TECH for:**
    - **Active Stakeholder Advisory Councils**
    - **A focus on meeting the needs of local business and industry**
    - **Planning regional cluster forums to gather input from stakeholders**
    - **A learning community of 55 principals supported by Kentucky TECH**

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Limitations

- **Aging Facilities**
- **Bandwidth Access**
- **Purchasing Procedures**
- **Hiring Procedures**
- **Geography and Transportation**
- **Program/Employment Caps**

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Challenges

- **Improving the Image and Perception of Technical Education**

- **Integrating Academic Instruction into the Technical Education Curriculum**

- **Work-Based Learning – Laws and Regulations**

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- **Adapt to Multiple Calendars and Schedules**
- **Provide Career Counseling Services**
- **Increase Support Services for Special Needs Students**

Recommendations

The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends that Kentucky TECH:

- **Request Cap Increases To Support:**
  - **Career Counselors**
  - **Special Needs Liaisons**
  - **New Program Initiatives**
- **Revise Purchasing and Hiring Practices to Avoid Delays**
- **Require Annual Contracts for All Staff**
- **Create Advisory Council/Group at the District Level**
- **Integrate Academic Opportunities**

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Next Steps

- **A written report of our findings and observations will be drafted and sent to the Executive Director within 30 days.**
- **After receipt of the report, the district is expected to**
  - Review and communicate the findings and observations contained in the report;
  - Initiate steps to address the recommendations in the report;
  - Continue to monitor accreditation requirements for the system and its schools;
  - Monitor the execution and impact of strategies for improvement; and
  - Continue to engage methods that provide for quality assurance.
  - Report to SACS CASI on progress in two years.

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Final Recommendation

- **The Quality Assurance Review Team recommends, without reservation, to the SACS CASI Board of Directors that Kentucky TECH be awarded district accreditation as a quality school system.**

- **Once approved, Kentucky TECH and all its schools are thereby accredited.**

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Final Thoughts

- **On behalf of the Quality Assurance Team, I extend:**
  - Our appreciation for your hospitality, support, and professionalism;
  - Our respect and acknowledgement of the quality of Kentucky TECH; and
  - Our congratulations for achieving district accreditation as a quality system.

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Kentucky TECH " Words of Wisdom"

"We are not just state employees, we are educators and our product is our students."

"Give us standards and we will measure up to them."

"CTE is a hidden goldmine with an emerging light."

"We have the strongest support staff of any organization."

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Kentucky TECH " Words of Wisdom"

"School improvement is a journey."

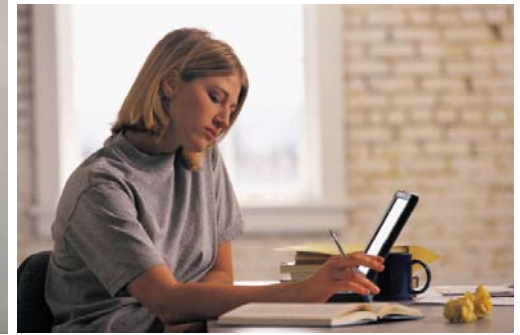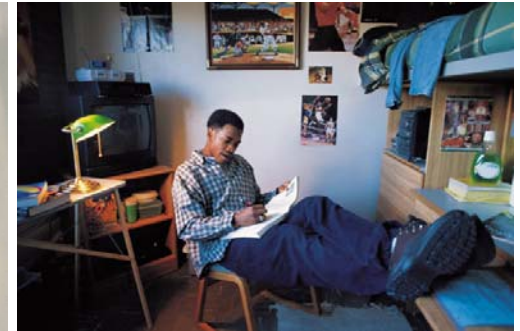**"Program Assessment means going beyond the classroom everyday."**

"We have plans. We just need to carry them out."

"We build leaders for tomorrow!"

"Our teachers are here to help us grow."

"We actually do things you need in life instead of just taking notes over at the other school."

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